DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 402 559 CS 012 670

AUTHOR Hudson-Ross, Sally; McWhorter, Patti
TITLE Findings from a Yearlong Job Exchange: A Mentor Teacher's Bill of Rights in Teacher Education. Reading Research Report No. 74.
INSTITUTION National Reading Research Center, Athens, GA.; National Reading Research Center, College Park, MD.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE 97
CONTRACT 117A20007
NOTE 26p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *College School Cooperation; English Teachers; *Faculty Development; Higher Education; *High Schools; *Mentors; Program Descriptions; Program Effectiveness; *Teacher Education; *Teacher Exchange Programs
IDENTIFIERS Teacher Researchers; Teaching Research

ABSTRACT

After teaching and conducting research in each other's worlds for a year, a high school English teacher and a university teacher educator could never be the same. With their colleagues, they developed a model yearlong teacher education program founded on three key principles: equality of school and university participants; teacher research; and respect for multiple, interrelated communities of learners. Because teachers' voices have been marginalized in most efforts to restructure teacher education, the voices here are in the powerful first-person voice of the school-based mentor teacher seeking an equitable, research-driven, and collaborative relationship with university colleagues. Also included are logistics and theoretical basis for the job exchange, research design and stance, and a description of the yearlong teacher education program. (Contains 30 references and a figure illustrating the multiple interrelated communities of learners with the high school classroom at the center.) (Author/RS)

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Findings from a Yearlong Job Exchange: A Mentor Teacher's Bill of Rights in Teacher Education

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NRRC National Reading Research Center

READING RESEARCH REPORT NO. 74
Winter 1997

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The work reported herein is a National Reading Research Center Project of the University of Georgia and University of Maryland. It was supported under the Educational Research and Development Centers Program (PR/AWARD NO. 117A20007) as administered by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education. The findings and opinions expressed here do not necessarily reflect the position or policies of the National Reading Research Center, the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, or the U.S. Department of Education.

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About the National Reading Research Center

The National Reading Research Center (NRRC) is funded by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement of the U.S. Department of Education to conduct research on reading and reading instruction. The NRRC is operated by a consortium of the University of Georgia and the University of Maryland College Park in collaboration with researchers at several institutions nationwide.

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About the Authors

Sally Hudson-Ross works primarily with secondary preservice teachers and their mentor teachers in local high schools through the Language Education department at the University of Georgia. In 1993–1994, Sally exchanged jobs with Patti McWhorter in the NRRC SYNERGY Project. Insights they gained from doing one another's jobs as teacher educator and high school teacher for a year directly influenced the development of a yearlong teacher education program in English Education at The University of Georgia.

Patti McWhorter teaches high school English at Cedar Shoals High School in Athens, Georgia, where she serves as chair of the English Department. Her 22 years in classroom teaching have included grades six through college. In addition, she has conducted numerous staff development courses throughout the state and presented at professional conferences throughout the state and nation.

National Reading Research Center
Universities of Georgia and Maryland
Reading Research Report No. 74
Winter 1997

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Abstract. *After teaching and conducting research in each other's worlds for a year, the authors—a high school English teacher and a university teacher educator—could never be the same. With their colleagues, they developed a model, yearlong teacher education program founded on three key principles: equality of school and university participants; teacher research; and respect for multiple, interrelated communities of learners. Because teachers' voices have been marginalized in most efforts to restructure teacher education, the authors speak here in the powerful first-person voice of the school-based mentor teacher seeking an equitable, research-driven, and collaborative relationship with university colleagues. Also included are logistics and theoretical basis for the job exchange, research design and stance, and a description of the yearlong teacher education program.*

For years as professional friends, we talked about exchanging roles for a year—Sally going back to teach high school English after 17 years and Patti going off to teach and conduct research in the college of education. We carried out our exchange during the 1993–1994 school year (see Hudson-Ross & McWhorter, 1995). A new colleague, Peg Graham, arrived at the university that year and joined both of us in exploring our new settings and eventually in recreating teacher education in English with a group of high school English teachers. (For further details of the new teacher education program and results of the first year of research, see Hudson-Ross & Graham, 1996.) The collaborative inquiry teacher-education program we co-designed is now in its third successful year. Based on extremely positive reports from administrators, mentor teachers, teacher candidates, and teacher educators, we are expanding the program this year to two networks of schools, each with approximately 35 teachers, 3 university-based teacher educators, and 25 teacher candidates. As a result, this will be the only way we educate English teachers at the University of Georgia.

In this report, we focus on what we learned from the job exchange that allowed us to re-

think how teacher education should be done, especially how university faculty and mentor teachers can work together in more productive ways. As qualitative researchers always attempt to do, we were able to make the very familiar strange: to see both the world of high school English and the world of teacher education through new, but very informed, eyes. Three key, interrelated components emerged from our work:

1. Equality of school and university participants in the teacher education program;
2. Co-research focused on middle/high school students and preservice teachers as learners within a content area and within the local school and university contexts; and
3. Multiple, interrelated communities of learners.

Together, these three components define a new form of professional development for *all* participants. Unique and valid needs of each group are met and rewards of value within each context are available. When any of these three components is absent, we suspect that a solid foundation is unlikely to be established, resulting in replication of the underlying problems and imbalances inherent in traditional teacher education programs (Goodlad, 1990). Importantly, our focus is not on revamping teacher education within the university's structures alone (we have only begun to negotiate change with Arts and Sciences, for example), but instead we focus on the nature of the school/university collaboration, the area we feel has been least attended to in discussions of restructuring teacher education. Because the mentor teacher's voice has been especially absent from these discussions, we speak from that first-person perspective below to describe our collaborations. We encourage university readers in existing or emerging collaborative groups to construct the "University Professor's Bill of Rights" in response to this voice in order to fit their own personal and local situations and to add to the local discussion.

First, however, we provide a brief background of the logistical details and the theoretical and research bases of our job exchange. We then explore each of the three key components in depth from a school-based mentor teacher's perspective. Our intent here is to provide other teacher educators at both school and university levels with grounds for discussion[1] as they reinvent their own programs in teacher education. While not everyone can take a year away to learn from one another as we did,[2] we be-

[1]Like Marilyn Cochran-Smith and Susan Lytle (1996) of the University of Pennsylvania, we do not propose here a large-scale model for replication as much as a "generative framework" that others might use as a basis for their own work. This world view is more in keeping with the principles and findings of our research in that we believe each group of participants must explore these issues within their own setting and context and expect to emerge with a unique and locally appropriate program that is, by nature, ever evolving. Note too that we consider all participants to be "teacher educators." We do not reserve that term for university faculty, but view mentor teachers, preservice teachers, and high school students as well to be "teacher educators," those from whom and through whom teachers at all levels learn.

[2] At the same time, we realize that our credibility within our group was enhanced by our recent parallel experiences. There is perhaps no better way to gain credibility among teachers (or teacher educators) than to have lived their lives either extensively, as Peg Graham had in her 17 years or Patti had in her 15 years of high school teaching, or intensively as Sally and Patti did in our yearlong, full-time job exchange that was heightened in impact because of our shared teacher education, research mindset.

lieve that what we learned about these issues must be central to any program development and can be translated across settings. We will be testing this assumption ourselves this year as we begin our second network of schools.

Logistics of the Job Exchange

We exchanged jobs for one full school year in 1993–1994.[3] While conducting the normal work of these jobs—including on-going collaborations between the school and teacher education programs at our university—we worked as active participant observers to collect and analyze data regarding teaching, learning, and teacher education within the context of our alternative settings. We continued to be full participants in school change efforts, college of education curriculum development, and efforts at co-reform jointly explored by school and university; however, for this year, we functioned fully in one another's shoes.

At the university, Patti was in charge of 25 hours of curriculum and methods and student teaching for a group of 20 preservice undergraduates and master's students for two quarters, placing them at her own local high school, where Sally was teaching, during the first quarter for observations and in six area schools for student teaching. She also taught a course in the teaching of writing in the spring, teaming and integrating the course with Peg Graham's literature section of the same students.

[3] No money changed hands; we each simply showed up and did the other person's job. We had tremendous support for the exchange from both the college and the school system. Two further yearlong college/school exchanges have followed ours at our university (see Baumann, 1995).

Patti took over leadership for our research and funding requirements including writing grant proposals and project reports for the job exchange. She was the primary investigator in our teacher education grant funded by the National Reading Research Center which allowed us to reinvent the program the following year. Her preliminary work involved making decisions to invite 25 teachers as participants, human subjects approvals, school system approvals, and arranging interviews. She engaged in college of education (English) curriculum development and expanded her staff development activities in a wide range of schools throughout the state. Importantly, she was not merely "clinical" faculty, but engaged in all of the work of a university faculty member.

At the local high school, Sally taught 5 full classes a day (3 average sophomore and 2 senior Advanced Placement); carried out normally assigned hall and cafeteria duties; worked with administrators, colleagues, counselors, parents, and students on a regular basis; planned and carried out instruction; evaluated student progress and work; and served on a school task force for instruction. Three of Patti's teacher education students—Maureen Kraft, Shelly Graves, and Wade Beals—spent many hours working in her classroom during the winter months.

Patti did maintain chairmanship of her high school English department as well as leadership of the high school yearbook staff, which met every morning during Sally's first period planning; thus we shared a common room for 1 hr each day. Sally kept up her participation on doctoral committees, helping four candi-

dates to complete dissertations in June 1994. Together, we continued to be key players in the school/university "co-reform" project through the UGA Coca-Cola Initiative in which we helped found a school-based Teacher Support Group of 15 interdisciplinary teachers and teacher educators, including ourselves, who learned together through peer coaching. We were also leaders through Patti's classes in college of education efforts at "undergraduate infusion," making high school classes and teachers available to university students on a regular basis early in their college careers.

Theoretical Basis of the Job Exchange

Fundamental to our initial job exchange were three assumptions about our relationship that we agreed to as we began and that continue to influence the work we do together. As you will see, these assumptions closely parallel the three key issues we discuss below; however, we were unaware of their power across settings and partnerships until after the job exchange at which time we understood these statements in new ways. From the beginning, we explicitly assumed that:

1. We have equal status as investigators;
2. We respect the insights and voices of both school-based and university-based teachers as reflective practitioners and teacher researchers; and
3. We believe that teaching and learning must be viewed within the larger contexts of community, school, and university.

Let us explain our thinking here. The school/university collaboration we developed (and called Project Synergy) goes beyond many "partnership models" (Day, 1991) where the teacher is "researched" and the professor is "the researcher." Our collaborative design was unique in that it was not just one individual "taking off" to experience or observe a different teaching/learning situation (e.g., a teacher becoming a clinical faculty member or teacher educator teaching for some time in a public school). Instead, it involved a partnership of two teachers "teaching" each other to teach and learn in new settings and new ways; thus, it is "synergistic." We respected our shared vision of public school teacher and university educator as co-equal research partners; we had to because we were both playing both roles. Although such equality is uncommon in the field and difficult to maintain (we continue to struggle through systemic incentives to undermine it, e.g., reward systems, job demands), equality remains essential to our work.

Secondly, both school and university communities often acknowledge the lack of fit between research in teaching and the world of everyday practitioners (Bolster, 1983; Cuban, 1990; Day, 1991) as well as between what is taught in universities and what teachers need in modern schools (Corrigan & Haberman, 1990). Leavitt (1991) even suggests that the world's most pressing problem in teacher education today is the "uneasy relationship" between the university and public school systems. As a result, within the past decade, numerous models for collaboration have been developed (see Greenberg, 1991; Holmes Group, 1986; Russell & Flynn, 1992; Sirotnik & Goodlad, 1988). Researchers argue that reform in schools and colleges of education

must be a process of co-reform. Yet in these models, teachers and researchers maintain their original stances and only rarely are teachers' perspectives and agendas the focus of the work.

In some venues, public school teachers' voices are gaining new respect, for example in the literatures on teaching (Clandinin, Davies, Hogan, & Kennard, 1993), school governance (Allen & Glickman, 1992; Glickman, 1992), and even teacher education (Heikkinen, 1992). Yet, as a group, they continue to report low efficacy (Corrigan & Haberman, 1990) and are basically marginalized in professional collaborations as adjunct teachers, advisors, or research "subjects."

Yet Lytle and Cochran-Smith (1992), among others (Bolster, 1983; Cuban, 1990), argue that we need different theories of knowledge for teaching which must emerge from systematic investigations by teachers themselves. University-based teacher educators too are beginning to value and practice reflection on their own teaching and programmatic practice, as evidenced by the emerging AERA SIG group on the Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices. The entire teacher-researcher movement, especially using interpretive, participant observer field methods, has created new roles, new responsibilities, and new potential for recognizing the value of teacher visions in school and classroom research, and we assert, in teacher education as well. As we both investigated our practice in the new worlds we had taken on, we heightened our awareness of and insights into the worlds we had left (see McWhorter & Hudson-Ross, 1996). Only through our synergistic exchange could we have fully comprehended the findings we present from the mentor teacher's voice below.

Finally, Zeichner and Liston (1987) argue that "we may be preparing student teachers for a teaching role that does not now exist, or does not have the sanction of the institutions in which teachers now work" (p. 44). Teachers of the next generation must be prepared to take on new roles in order to shape their own work and the school environment, especially in settings where they are invited to participate in shared governance and school reform (Allen & Glickman, 1992; Glickman, 1992; Goodlad, 1990; Zeichner & Liston, 1987). Thus, research that explores teaching and teacher education must be context-specific and context-aware (Bolster, 1983; Tabachnick, 1989). Erickson (1982) calls for three levels of interpretive investigation—individual teacher, classroom or immediate learning environment, and school/system—all of which are "mutually constitutive, inextricably interrelated, and should be studied as a whole" (Eisenhart & Borko, 1991, p. 145). We feel that teachers and teacher educators together must strive to understand the multiple levels of present-day educational communities in order to achieve a fully integrated vision of the job that confronts us.

Research Design and Stance

In our collaborative research, we shared two overall research questions:

1. What is our shared vision of teaching and learning English in today's high school classroom?
2. How can we help beginning teachers (and teachers going through changes in

philosophy, method, or setting) work toward that vision?

Our experiences and findings are reported elsewhere (Hudson-Ross & McWhorter, 1995; McWhorter & Hudson-Ross, 1996), but we will briefly explain our research stance and data collection and analysis methods here.

We might simply say that we collected qualitative data in two research settings. We must, however, qualify our stance within that data. Much present research in teaching and teacher education comes from a perspective of cognitive psychology or anthropology (Eisenhart & Borko, 1991). While it is obvious that we were not working from a cognitive psychology framework, we were also not specifically interested in anthropological or cultural issues of schooling. Instead, our concern was the lived life of teacher and teacher educator. We sought first to understand ourselves as we experienced new lives and contexts and then to use that understanding to help others "beginning" to take on the same roles: teacher candidates, mentor teachers playing new roles in teacher education, teachers experiencing change in their own practice, and teacher educators working with both beginning and experienced teachers in new and more equitable and meaningful ways.

As a result, we consciously chose a sociological framework for our qualitative research because we believe that in order to study the perspectives of members of a community themselves as they work, it is "necessary to venture, firsthand, into places where activities that interest them are taking place and observe human life *in situ*" (Adler & Adler, 1987, p. 12). We believe that only by experiencing and coming to understand theory and practice as full participants in one another's worlds could we honestly and fully assess and redesign teacher education in an authentic way. Therefore, our work was based on interpretive, active, participant observation fieldwork in two settings—a public high school and a teacher education program (Adler & Adler, 1987; Erickson, 1986).

Lincoln and Guba (1985), among others, cite three means by which researchers can increase the probability that findings from such interpretive research will be credible and reliable: prolonged engagement in the field, persistent observation, and triangulation which includes multiple and different sources, methods, and investigators. All three methods were built into our project design. We remained in our jobs for a full year, allowing us each to experience the ebb and flow of the school year and the growth and change of ourselves and our students: very realistic and essential aspects of the work of teachers and teacher educators.

We each kept extensive, daily field notes of our experiences and insights (written in journals and/or transcribed from dictation) and compiled all written plans, surveys, artifacts, records, and student work. A research assistant and others (teacher education students active in both settings) provided other lenses by conducting interviews with students and with us, observing and recording field notes, organizing and commenting on data, and reflecting orally on their observations. Frequent informal research meetings and quarterly full-day meetings allowed us to decide to collect certain types of data and evidence (confirming and

disconfirming), to seek insights from particular others, or to experiment with issues or methods of teaching that had become of interest.

Data analysis has followed constant comparison procedures as portrayed by Glaser & Strauss (1967) with the intention of generating hypotheses and concepts from the data. Since leaving the field in June of 1994, we read and reread our data, sought and tested hypotheses together, wrote analytic narratives, and compiled reports of our findings (Erickson, 1986). More importantly, we have also reflected on our hypotheses, emerging concepts, and narratives in the public forum of an emerging collaborative inquiry community of other teachers and teacher educators. As Day (1991) argues, "researchers and teachers ... need to come together in coequal relationships where power is shared, knowledge negotiated, and contributions of persons of both groups are valued" (p. 538). We have taken our lived experience to our peers and used our heightened awareness to work with them in shaping a new brand of teacher education that meets our first three assumptions: we are all equal collaborators, we are all researchers in our own settings, and we are all conscious of and players in our own communities.

One Teacher Education Program

We have tried to design a teacher education program based on a lived version of the Mentor Teacher's Bill of Rights below. Further details of the program are available in Hudson-Ross and Graham (1996), but we briefly summarize here to provide context for the Bill of Rights or "generative framework" that follows.

The teacher education program we have designed involves mentor teachers and university faculty meeting during the summer to plan and restructure the program as needed. In our case, every aspect of the program was initially put on the table for discussions; we began only with the notions that student teachers would be in the schools all year long, that campus courses would be integrated and connected to work in schools, and that the same university professors would team-teach and remain with the cohort groups of teacher candidates and mentor teachers all year. Each summer, mentor teachers also read teacher candidate resumes and cover letters to make placements, send letters of invitation to their own teacher candidates, and welcome them to their schools for preplanning and the first week of school. During preplanning, the two university-based teacher educators spend at least part of a day at each school to interview the new teacher candidates (who, to learn research techniques, transcribe their own interview as baseline data), help out in innumerable ways, and visit with the mentor teachers.

During the fall quarter, teacher candidates take 15 hours of content courses (Teaching of Writing, Response to Literature, and Language Studies for Teachers team-taught in an integrated fashion by the university faculty) while being in their schools 10–12 hr per week. There they complete a list of activities including visiting classes, meeting personnel, conducting research projects to explore student perceptions and experiences of the content area, and beginning to teach lessons. Winter courses include Curriculum and Methods (focusing on unit planning for spring quarter)

and Reading, again with 10–12 hr spent in the school each week.

Importantly, teacher-candidate work at school is also the basis for their work on campus. They bring research data to campus to analyze as a group; they write and read each others' weekly "think pieces" about issues they are struggling with; they read texts and discuss implications for their "own kids"; and they plan units for the same students they are gradually coming to know across the school year. Both the courses and the school/university experiences are highly integrated and based on current emerging needs. The same two professors teach all courses and lead all field work except the reading course which is taught by another department.

Mentor teachers and university professors meet quarterly, school representatives meet as needed, and a weekly bulletin that details syllabus, assignments, opportunities, and news is put out by the university faculty who also try to stay in touch with mentor teachers by phone and drop-in visits as much as possible. We recognize the value of university faculty visiting the high school classrooms to "get to know the kids" whom mentor teachers are currently working with and whom teacher candidates will teach full-time in the spring. As a result, these high school students and their learning are the focus of everyone's attention.

How did we get to this plan? What makes it special? What makes it successful? Far more than appears in a program description.

Let us shift to our single ("I") mentor teacher voice to explain what we, as teachers, wanted in a productive school/university endeavor to best educate beginning teachers.

A Mentor Teacher's Bill of Rights

We speak in the voice of the school-based mentor teacher addressing those who plan and organize teacher education programs. Patti McWhorter, grounded in the public high school setting, brings her 1993–1994 job exchange experience in teacher education to bear; Sally Hudson-Ross, grounded primarily in the university, speaks here from her experiences as a high school teacher during the job exchange as she worked with preservice teachers in her room.

We hope that our combined voice speaks for the many mentor teachers with whom we have worked and those who read this report. We hope that by using this "generative framework" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1996) as the basis for extensive and honest talk, other local groups of school and university-based colleagues can begin to recreate teacher education as we continue to do.

* * * *

Equality of School and University Participants in the Teacher Education Program

First of all, I am busy and I am committed to my kids. My agenda and mandate are to teach high school students. Everything else must be secondary. I care about my work and am consumed by it. I love my kids, and anything that takes me away from them is difficult for me. An agenda that engages you (but not me at the moment), takes me out of my classroom, or involves someone else getting to work and play with my kids is troublesome.

Each takes a chunk out of who I am—a teacher; each makes me less whole, less valuable to myself, less able to concentrate on what matters. My agenda must be central to any shared work.

Secondly, I have a right to be who I am, as a person and as a teacher. My experiences, history, career stage, and current life demands make me who I am. And although I do not always say or believe this, I like who I am. I am unique and proud of my work, but I am fragile. I work in a world where everything is changing, constantly, daily, faster every year. I want to grow and be a better teacher, to be allowed to make the mistakes that come with real change. That alone qualifies me to be a strong mentor of beginning teachers. Any talk of "the best teachers" or "bad teachers" hurts deeply. On any one day, I am both; I will never be as good as Beth or Roger down the hall; but I am trying. I need to know that you will not talk negatively about me or my methods once you get back in the car, back on campus, or out at another school. Do not ask me to become destabilized in front of my students, my teacher candidate, or my peers; do not push me further than I am ready to go. A couple of years of building confidence and trust in you, my peers, and this program must precede changes in the way I teach. As I learn, I need to maintain face, if not always control.

Third, recognize that we—university and school folks—have a history that is deep and not at all positive, whether you and I were the specific players or not. Teachers know that university people—though not necessarily you—"got out" of teaching; think less of teachers who stayed; use teachers for their own gain; write about us as if we were animals to be studied; categorize, count, narrow, and dehumanize the work we do, and publish it in ways we cannot understand. Teacher education faculty, in particular, prefer to use graduate students for supervision, would far rather teach graduate courses than preservice education ("let" clinical faculty come in and do that), read and write books but forget kids, and feel that time spent in schools is a waste for them professionally. (It may be, but that is not my concern and is an insult to my work.) It is going to take time and patience on your part for me to believe that you or this program are different. Show me in everything you do.

Fourth, as I come to trust you, I must be able to depend on you now and over the long haul. Be here when I need you, and even when I do not. Come to school, call me, return my calls. Ask (and mean it), "What's going on with your kids?" and "What do you need?" and then listen and help me if I can verbalize a need right now, or move on if I do not have time. Do not be offended, but keep asking. Let me call you at home (at a reasonable hour) when my teacher candidate and I have a crisis; realize that personal relationships within the small and tense space of a classroom must be smooth. If crises continue—no matter what the reasons—remove the teacher candidate. I must have stability to be good to my kids. With me, care first about my kids. I am not a bad person if an assigned teacher candidate and I cannot get along, but keep me in the mentor teacher group; do not let me lose my connections when I need them most. And please, make a long-term commitment to our group. Do not invent a program and then turn it over to someone

else; do not rotate leaders every year so we have to learn to trust again; do not abandon us when a better idea comes along. We need continuity—we crave it.

Fifth, find the humility it takes to be a co-learner and friend with me. Examine your own practice and program, question the research and theory you espouse just as you ask me to, sponsor and come to happy hours and parties, introduce me to your peers as your friend (not one of "our" teachers), help me find new ways to grow and become more of a professional, and most of all, trust me too. I am willing to learn about your life and work, the pressures that university people experience (I have heard about promotion and tenure, publish or perish, but what does that mean in your life?), and to commiserate when you feel overburdened too. Together, people to people, teacher to teacher, we can overcome the barriers that have separated us.

Co-Research Focused on Middle/High School Students and Preservice Teachers as Learners Within a Content Area and Within the Local School and University Contexts

For all my not wanting to leave my classroom, I have been alone in here too long. A teacher candidate who shares my room and kids all year can be a partner, a friend, a second parent even, who cares about them as much as I do, who struggles with how to make things work better. I do not have enough time to talk to individual students, to analyze surveys, to see what is affecting students' lives outside my classes as much as I would like. But a teacher candidate conducting her own research to learn about kids—interviewing writers and their writing, examining their attitudes toward reading literature at home and school, shadowing a student through the school day (Graham & Hudson-Ross, 1996)—can summarize and bring that information to me in a format I can quickly survey. She can also raise questions that I, in the daily routine of things, cannot see. Why DO I do makeup work this way—what are other options? Why are they so bored with these short stories? Why do the boys in our room always act out but the girls stay quiet? Why are they failing my tests? What will happen if we give them choices for what they read or write? Together, we can explore these shared questions—our real questions, not only ones imposed from outside—in informal ways throughout the year. With two of us, we can manage short taped interviews, collecting and analyzing questionnaires, keeping focused notes in a dialogue journal as one of us observes the other, focusing on one struggling student's growth. The teacher candidate partner can bring me insights from her peers in other schools who share what they learn from other mentors and from university-based discussions. They can share their papers and think pieces and journals on reading new texts and research, allowing me to enter into a professional dialogue when I do not have time to do the reading or take a class. All of us now have access to wider theory and empirical research as well as our own data and interpretations. From this perspective, a teacher candidate gives me what only university professors have had: a research assistant and opportunities to enter into the larger professional world beyond my classroom.

When together we have learned what we sought, we can move on to new questions that emerge, to new experiments, to sometimes sharing with other teachers and learning with them in the professional arena. What I get is staff development tailored to my classroom, housed, in fact, in my space. For once, I do not have to go downtown to learn something. What my teacher candidate gets is a setting for questioning; for experimenting with me, alone, and with others; for developing a research mindset that I hope will always lead her to both ask questions and to seek partners with whom to teach and grow. We do NOT have to be alone.

Although I do not care if teacher candidates "physically" meet in our school or not for their college courses (where would we put them?), I do respect their need to learn outside the high school classroom as well. They need and deserve time to read texts and to explore issues with their peers who are in the same beginning place. However, the "mental" location of that campus work should be in my classroom, and the classrooms of the other mentor teachers in our group. If they read a book, they should decide upon its credibility just as I do—as a measure of how this makes sense with kids in a range of classrooms. If they analyze data seeking patterns across schools and various contexts, they should be aware of individual and class (oh, my second period!) differences as well. They must learn the teacher's realistic way of assessing the reliability and validity and current value of research, theory, and other literature in the field. It must first of all be credible in my setting and confirmed by our own teacher research with our students as resources.

Those who teach campus courses must realize that English is fully integrated for me: in theory and practice, in discipline and planning and building community, in composition and language and literature. In my life, I cannot separate out issues of multiple intelligence, cooperative learning, crisis management, or reader response. University people who see these as separate courses, units, or lines of research diminish my job and make it look easier. Instead, a teaching life is constantly in flux, constantly moving and full of impromptu decisions; it is of the moment. Campus courses must reflect that truth and deal with teacher candidates' issues as they emerge.

As you struggle to reorganize campus courses to connect to schools, be willing to learn (and fail) with your students and colleagues just as I do. By putting teacher education courses and programs on the table for all of our group to examine in an on-going basis, we all become insider-colleagues helping university professors do their work better as well. In your teaching, model the behaviors we expect of new and experienced teachers. Be researchers in your own classrooms, not just standing aside or expecting schools to change but participating in real *co*-reform. Collaborative teaching among university professors and/or graduate students or instructors gives you a local team, parallel to the teams of teacher candidates and mentor teachers in the schools, to examine questions of interest to you in your setting. When I can see you as a teacher researcher examining your students' (our teacher candidates) learning in real and impor-

tant ways, I can respect your questions in my space too and open my teaching and my students' learning to critique and study. Allow our mentor teacher group to provide a critical lens to keep you honest, just as we begin to let you do so in our classrooms. Join all of us in co-constructing new visions of teaching and learning in both college and school classrooms. You too do NOT have to be alone any longer.

Multiple, Interrelated Communities of Learners

If in this age we believe that knowledge is constructed socially through the interactions of two or more people, if we want our students to learn through discussions and engagement with the insights of others, then we too deserve opportunities to learn with our peers. A group founded on collaborative and collegial inquiry and growth means that we all belong in many ways, that I am invited to become more of myself and enjoy my work. Interrelated communities of learners (figure 1) provide the forum for meaningful and rewarding professional growth.

Mentor teacher and teacher candidate. When a teacher candidate is in my classroom all year, we develop a relationship far deeper than traditional programs allow. I know, I have had student teachers or been one myself. Traditionally, I am asked to turn over my kids to a young stranger, perhaps after a brief observation period. My administrators and I worry about the quality of education our students are getting, about the difficulties we will encounter and have to solve, about how to provide advice without offending—our time is so short! Teacher candidates in that setting must read and plan; get to know students and school; walk the tense line of friendship with a mentor teacher s/he has only recently met; balance campus seminars; and through it all, be evaluated all at once. And we wonder why the first year of teaching is so tough?

Instead, realize that relationships take time to build. Tensions are normal, but as in any relationship, they can be resolved over time and experience and coming to know one another as people. With an on-going, shared focus on our students, neither the teacher candidate nor I need to fear the insecurity of hasty, evaluative judgments. (Yes, they judge us too!) Instead of concern for ourselves, our attention is constantly pulled back to the kids. Through written, three-way dialogue journals with you, we present, question, and argue the tough issues that sometimes we cannot speak.

Being a teacher educator or mentor—not a supervising teacher of student teaching—gives me perspective; I KNOW this person who I am able to coach and struggle with through an entire year. It allows me to trust her gradually as I watch her learn to know and understand my kids, to manage their behaviors for learning, to become a part of my school, to plan for our situation, and to teach little by little by little. When it is her turn, I am excited to watch my newest peer fly on her own, knowing that my kids are safe. I expect her first year to be smooth (barring irrational job demands) because I know she now has the skills to make her own way, to create her own communities of learners.

Mentor teacher and university teacher group. But I too need my care and feeding. It

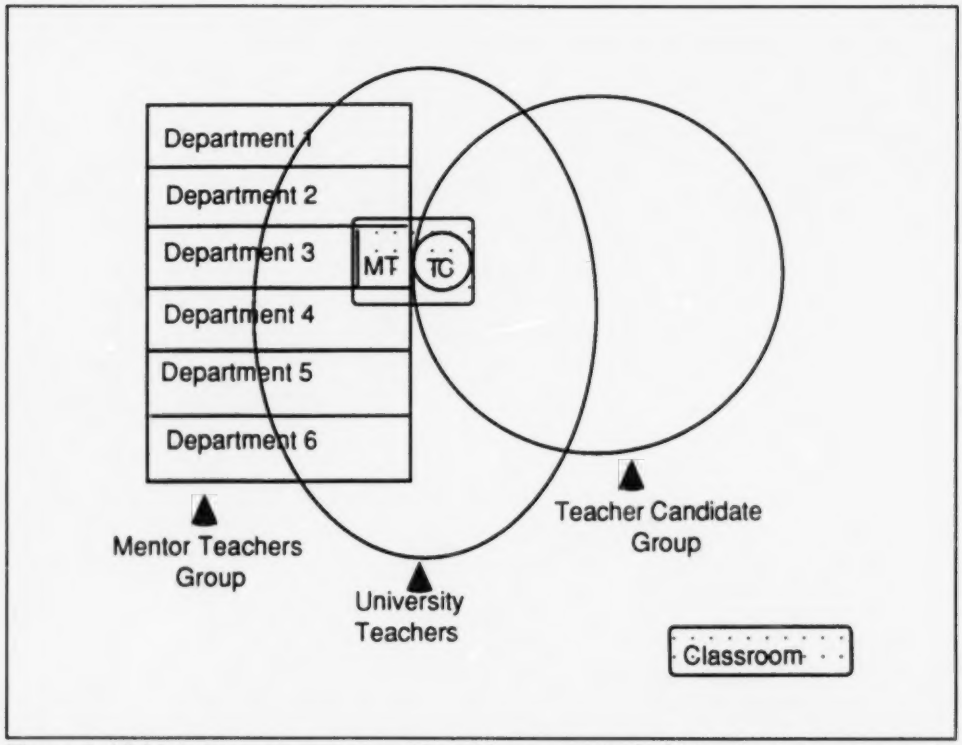

Figure 1. Multiple interrelated communities of learners with the high school classroom as the center for all.

is tough to work through the issues of a new teacher candidate every year, tough to learn this much at once. I know you are experiencing the same struggles with 25 teacher candidates in a range of settings. Neither of us has to do this alone.

First, we all want to feel ownership and power within the program as a whole. I want to be involved in making placements, and to speak out about assignments, expectations of teacher candidates in my room and school, and program development. I want to be sure that neither my teacher candidate nor I are put in uncomfortable situations or put through worthless hoops. Meeting in a small group with representative mentors from other schools and the university teachers allows me to hear how others feel and to help us compromise to meet everyone's needs. In whole group meetings, I can see how my situation is just like everyone else's (what a relief) or truly unique (and ask for special help if needed). As we continually negotiate the program, I know it is mine.

From my mentor-teacher/university-teacher group, I want several things: sympathy (lots of it), food and friendship, laughter, chances to

travel and get attention for my good work, freedom from my isolation, a refuge in these difficult times, intellectual stimulation connected directly to my classroom and school. We suspect you want the same things plus opportunities to conduct research, publish, co-author, and present papers at conferences. Together, we can be all of those things. The individual power of each teacher grows in our gatherings; together, we create strength. Because our focus is always on our students—teacher candidates and high school students—I do not feel that I am being judged. Instead, this is a place where we all experiment and learn. In return, I agree to participate in all ways the group expects: examining teacher-candidate plans and campus work, attending meetings, writing in the dialogue journal, reading weekly bulletins, and so forth. As I contribute my time, knowledge, and experience, the group fulfills my needs and moves me forward.

My own school and department are also enriched by our experiences outside our school. We bring new ideas and insights and problems from our discussions with other mentor teachers, and we continue those discussions in our own workrooms. Cross-school visitations empower me to see in new ways what a text or talk never can. If I am one of only two or three in my department, or our department is the only one in the school that wants to think deeply about teaching, we gain a cohort of similar peers through the mentor-teacher group. If our department or school is strong, we get to share with others what we have learned locally. Time is hard to come by—always—but time spent with mentor teacher and university peers enriches me and my setting as no other professional activity can.

Teacher candidate and university teacher group. I am glad my teacher candidate has her own peers to rely on and to learn with. To be honest, it takes some of the burden off of me because I know she is cared for by so many others. Besides, I know that she has interests, questions, problems (even tensions with me) that I have grown beyond but that other beginners need to struggle with. Her teacher-candidate group also has a year to gel as a community of learners—they read together, compare research findings across schools, debate and discuss, read and respond to each others' think pieces and portfolios, share teacher talk and stories. As I have come to value my peers more and more at this point in my career, I believe it is essential that s/he too knows the value of a community for his/her own personal sanity and growth as teacher. I hope that we show him/her in everything we do that peers matter, and that we help him/her know how to find like-minded partners in his/her future.

Being with one teacher all year allows a special bond, a special opportunity to know kids as they develop. This means, however, that my teacher candidate only experiences one school in depth. Luckily, his/her peers are placed in five to eight other middle and high schools, they teach kids from a range of circumstances from rural to suburban to urban, they encounter problems we do not (this year), they share how their mentor teachers do things differently than we do. S/he gets the opportunity to visit his/her peers in their schools, to see their students on video, and to talk about their varied experiences. Thus, although s/he may

not experience each setting, s/he is aware of a broader range of possibilities, issues, and contexts while enjoying the benefits of a yearlong, stable situation.

Through his/her teacher-candidate group, s/he also becomes a part of the larger profession by reading professional journals, presenting his/her research and listening to that of others at conferences, listening to a range of speakers from our group and beyond, and staying abreast of current issues, theories, research, and methods. I envy him/her his/her time to reflect so much (and know s/he does not yet realize WHY that time is so special), but I hope that by coming to think this deeply now, s/he will always see teaching as a learning process.

University teachers. You are on a first-name basis with us; you care about our kids; you meet with us, party with us, cry with us, grow yourselves as part of our multiple communities. At first, you accept leadership for making things happen that we cannot: you set up meetings, arrange for food (tell us what to bring!), find funding for us to travel and to do our work, bring us resources, listen. Gradually as we gain confidence in ourselves and our peers, we can take on new responsibilities: writing grant proposals, presenting conference papers, organizing our own staff-development programs.

But you too need your own rewards. We understand that we may not see you for weeks at a time when you must write or teach another course. Yet we know that your hearts are with us in the schools, that you like being here, that you want to be with us—and that you will sneak out when you can just for fun. One of you is always available by phone or can be available in an emergency. When two of you team-teach, you support both us and each other. You can alternate who is teaching on campus and who is visiting. You can spell each other for writing or conference time. It is obvious that you sincerely enjoy working together as much as we do. Together, the two or three of you create a team—just like my teacher candidate and me—who can explore your own teaching, share your own kids (the teacher candidates, and I suppose us too), conduct research about how we all learn and grow together, publish it with and for us to let others understand what we have discovered. It is possible and acceptable for us all to earn our respective rewards of value within our very different worlds.

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In her presidential address to the American Educational Research Association, Ann Lieberman (1992) called for the kind of work we are conducting. Collaborative work in schools/universities, she said, will produce new knowledge that "cannot be categorized as basic or applied research; it is knowledge that is co-constructed and owned by practitioner and researcher alike.... They are scholars and they are advocates for transforming schools. They are creators of knowledge and critical analysis of the change process.... The practice-theory connection is no better served than when it is lived. We can learn *from* as well as *about* practice. Our challenge is to create a community that educates all of us, those in the university and those in the schools, a community that

expands our relationships with one another and, in so doing, our knowledge and our effectiveness" (pp. 10–11).

We hope others will join us in confronting and overcoming the barriers that keep us apart and in celebrating the unions that are possible.

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